

## How to Recycle Your Used Electronics

**From Apple iPods to HP Ink-Jet Printer Cartridges, Recycling Your e-Waste Made Easy**



Most people love getting new gadgets for the holidays, whether they are tech-savvy professionals or folks who never figured out how to program their VCRs or set up a MySpace page.

This year there are more possibilities than ever to find under the tree, from the revolutionary, highly accessible Wii Nintendo console to sophisticated cell phones that are connecting people in new ways. Even underprivileged children around the world are now receiving discount laptops in record numbers, hopefully helping to breach the digital divide.

But the burgeoning market of electronics and accelerating pace of technology have meant increased environmental impact. This is perhaps never more true than after the holidays, when people clean out their old gear in favor of the new shiny toys and appliances they have just received, or purchased through gifts, bonuses or seasonal sales. With the 2009 change in TV

transmissions around the corner, even more e-waste is being generated. Plus, consider that the average cell phone user changes handsets every 18 months.

The good news is awareness of the potential ecological impact is also rising, and there are ways to make a difference, especially at the end of your product's life.

It's no small step, considering that 20 to 50 million tons of electronics waste (often called e-waste) is discarded globally every year, according to Greenpeace. If all that e-rubbish were put into containers on a train it would go once around the world! E-waste is the fastest growing component of the municipal solid waste stream, and currently makes up five percent of all municipal solid waste.

In the past, no one thought of recycling computers and other electronics. The only option was tossing them on the curb. But these days engineers have taken notice that electronics usually contain a wealth of valuable materials. Plus, recycling almost always means lower net carbon emissions, which is something everyone is now paying closer attention to because of global warming. Finally, electronics are made with a sizable amount of lead, cadmium, brominated fire retardants and plastics that can leach toxic breakdown products — that's stuff no one wants in their water supply!

The Consumer Electronics Association, which represents electronics manufacturers, encourages people to recycle their e-waste, and has set up a handy Website to make the process simple. Log on to [mygreenelectronics.org](http://mygreenelectronics.org), where you can search for local recycling drop-off points by zip code and product category. You'll also find tips and info on electronics recycling, and a cool [energy calculator](#) that will show you how much juice each product uses.

### How to Recycle E-Waste, by Brand

[Apple](#) - [Dell](#) - [Sony](#) - [HP](#) - [Gateway](#) - [Best Buy](#)

## Apple

Apple has been making headlines recently for more than its brilliant design and quality customer service. The company also now offers a free U.S. recycling program for old computers and monitors — with the purchase of a new Mac. There is also a free iPod recycling program conducted through Apple's retail stores (earn a 10% discount).

Additionally Apple has instituted a trade-in program for educational and business customers in the United States.

In 2006, Apple recycled 13 million pounds of e-waste, the equivalent of 9.5 percent of the weight of all products sold seven years earlier. The company says it expects this percentage to grow to 13 percent in 2007, and to 20 percent in 2008. By 2010, it predicts it will be recycling 19 million pounds of e-waste per year — nearly 30 percent of the product weight sold seven years earlier.

Learn more about [recycling Apple products](#).

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[Dell](#) - [Sony](#) - [HP](#) - [Gateway](#) - [Best Buy](#) - [Any Brand](#)

## **Dell**

Dell recently made headlines by announcing its goal of becoming the first major computer company to go [carbon neutral](#). In addition, Dell has implemented systems to both recycle and reuse old computers.

Through the company's partnership with the National Cristina Foundation, any consumer or business can donate working, used computer systems to charity in exchange for a possible tax deduction. The foundation then places the donated technology with local nonprofits and public agencies that service disabled and economically disadvantaged children and adults. Dell and NCF provide this work in Brazil, Canada, France, Ireland, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Dell also offers consumers free recycling of any Dell-branded computer equipment at any time. With purchase of a new Dell computer or printer, consumers can also take advantage of free recycling of other brands of used computer equipment. The recycling is managed by Dell's selected partners, who are required to adhere to Dell's high environmental standards.

Learn more about [recycling Dell products](#).

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## **Sony**

Sony has a program to take back your old notebook or PC for credit, which you can use at SonyStyle.com or at a Sony Style retail store. Simply take your old Sony notebook into your local Sony Style or Sony Outlet store, or mail it in.

Also, you may take old Sony products to any [Waste Management](#) facility in all 50 states. Drop them off for recycling for free. Sony says the ultimate plan is to have a recycling center within 20 miles of most U.S. residents.

Learn more, and locate a site near you, [here](#).

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## **HP**

Hewlett Packard has been recycling consumer products since 1987, making it an early leader in going green.

Customers have several options to make sure their old e-waste doesn't end up polluting the planet.

An HP trade-in program offers users the opportunity to capture the fair market value of aging technology and upgrade to new HP technology. Every product category is covered, as are HP and non-HP products.

Companies can earn money for aging qualified computer equipment that is turned in. That in turn will be refurbished and resold, after any data is wiped.

The company now takes back for recycling, at no cost, HP printer cartridges. Many newer units ship with pre-paid return labels, making the process simple. Or, you can print out prepaid labels, for free, from the company's Website. Rechargeable batteries can also be recycled for free at HP's 32,000 partner retail locations (find the one nearest you at the company's site).

HP will also recycle any brand of computer hardware. Getting set up is easy online, and will cost between \$13 and \$34 per item.

HP also facilitates donations of older equipment to the less fortunate, through the National Cristina Foundation.

Learn more about [HP's recycling program](#).

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## **Gateway**

Gateway has a trade-in program in which customers get Gateway credit if they recycle their old PCs.

Also, the company has an innovative program in which recent Gateway customers can get cash for sending in preowned, working technology products. The initiative is managed by DealTree.

Gateway also has a program in which people can ship in e-waste for proper recycling, though there are fees depending on weight.

Learn more about [Gateway's recycling program](#).

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## **Best Buy**

Best Buy is the largest U.S. retailer of consumer electronics, and it is also a major force in recycling e-waste. In 2006, more than 20 million pounds of electronics were recycled through company programs.

A pioneering effort by Best Buy is the free recycling drop-off kiosks that can be found just inside the door of every Best Buy store in America. There passersby can drop off old cell phones, rechargeable batteries and ink-jet cartridges at no cost.

What many consumers may not know is that Best Buy also has an appliance recycling program. The company will remove old appliances from consumers' homes and send them to recyclers. There any harmful materials will be separated and disposed of, such as CFCs, usable parts will be salvaged, and other materials will be recycled for scrap.

Additionally, new Best Buy cell phone customers receive free, postage-paid envelopes to mail old phones to ReCellular. In turn, ReCellular donates dollars from its recycling program to Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Finally, the company is well known for hosting recycling events at its store parking lots, during which people can come drop off a wide range of items for recycling.

Learn more about [Best Buy's recycling program](#).

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